

BENINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Benington Annual Parish Meeting
10 May 2017 preceeding the Parish Council Meeting
Benington School

Minutes

Present: R Bott (Chair) J Jaques
B Morcom S James
K Daniel

In attendance: J Haire (Clerk), and 1 member of the public

01. Apologies: Cllr Hughes

02. Minutes of the Last Meeting

- **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday, 11 May 2016**
Parish Councillors agreed that the Minutes be approved. The Minutes were signed by the Chairman.

03. Annual Parish Report

- **Chairman's Report** The Chairman read out the Annual Parish Report for the year 2016/2017 as follows:
I would like to thank the members of the Parish Council for their time and knowledge over the year. Boo Taylor resigned at the end of 2016 and Stephen James was co-opted to fill his place. Julie Haire has now managed over 18 months as Parish Clerk. She has brought much needed order and professionalism to the post and I would like to thank her for her vital input. Tina Piggott has been doing a great job litter picking for some years now, and I would like to thank her, as well as Leon Stracy who has also cleared a considerable amount of litter, particularly in Shummery Lane and Walkern Road.

Kate Daniel's village pond project has progressed. The pond was dredged in the autumn and the fence on the Duck Lane side has been replaced; the Walkern Road side of the fence has been repaired. Kate has been meeting with contractors to get prices and specifications for planting along the Duck Lane margin of the pond.

Bob Morcom has arranged the installation of the second of two defibrillators supplied by the British Heart Foundation on the north wall of Ernest Doe facing the Methodist Chapel. The other one was installed last year in the entrance to the Parish Hall. Bob has also, with some difficulty, arranged training by the East of England Ambulance Service last Thursday which around 40 people attended. Bob has also waded through quantities of District Council paperwork to produce responses to the East Herts draft District Plan, the Garage site in Three Styles and proposed development of Gresley Way. Bob's contributions, as well as being of a cerebral nature, also included a number of practical repairs such as re felting the Stoopers Hill bus stop roof.

The Benington Fair Committee had a very successful year. Whilst the Parish Council cannot take credit for this, all the Councillors made a contribution, particularly on the day. The Parish Council covered the cost of signage and insurance. The Committee, which included Mark Hughes, must be congratulated on their efforts which raised a record amount of money for village organisations.

Jo Jaques has been the Parish Council's representative with the school. There are currently 103 pupils and the last Ofsted grade was Good. The governors and teachers are committed to improving on that. The current Head Jenny Stevens is retiring in the summer and Mrs Swann will take over as the new Head in September.

Roads in the village have suffered from the usual potholes and blocked gulleys. These have all in due course been reported to Highways. Some have been repaired and some not. On occasion the Parish Council have paid outside contractors to clear vital gulleys such as the ones at the bottom of Stoopers Hill and outside the Parish Hall. Thanks in the main to Mark Hughes, the leaking telephone service box outside the Parish Hall has finally been repaired.

I met Peter Warren last Tuesday for an update on progress with the pavilion. The Trust has finished the foundation blockwork, and money has been donated for the concrete flooring beams. They have applied for a grant from Sport England for the walls, windows and roof, and they expect to hear from Sport England shortly. The Trust is then going to apply to other charities for money to do the interior. Peter also said that he had applied for some of the East Herts grants that the Parish Clerk has been forwarding to him.

Planning has been the usual crop of extensions and alterations. The main event has probably been the Planning Application Consultation for the development of up to 13 dwellings, including associated access, on Gosmore Paddock, the field behind the bungalows opposite Earnest Does. Responding to representation from village residents the Parish Council has opposed the proposal. Currently the Developers have withdrawn their application.

04. Accounts

The Chairman presented the accounts for the year which were agreed.

05. Question time

None

06. Members Points of Information

- The Precept was discussed, and whilst the amount had not been increased in the past two years, Cllr Morcom indicated that it may need to be increased in the next financial year.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.50 pm.